

(Washington, D.C.) –Today, Reps. Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Linda Sánchez (D-CA), Donna F. Edwards (D-MD) and Tim Ryan (D-OH) along with 57 other House Democrats formally sent a letter to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker-elect John Boehner requesting an update on which Republican members and members-elect who have called for a repeal of the Affordable Care Act will decline their own taxpayer-subsidized health care.

The letter is in response to a November 16 article in Politico, where it was reported that Rep.-elect Andy Harris (R-MD), who ran on a platform of repealing the Affordable Care Act, raised concerns during an orientation seminar over the gap in coverage he would incur when receiving his health care benefits through the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

Harris questioned one of the many problems with America’s current health care system—coverage gaps. Most Americans also face a gap in coverage when changing jobs and that gap is often twice as long as the 28 days Harris and other members-elect will have to wait come January. Not to mention, millions of Americans find themselves without any health insurance for months or even years. This is exactly why Democrats have been so committed to improving our health care system in a way that provides families with stable access to health care.

“For months, Republicans have been shoveling out hypocrisy and lies to the American public, and it ends here. It is time for Republicans to put their proverbial money where their mouth is – if they want to deny Americans access to health care, they should not accept taxpayer-subsidized care for themselves,” said Rep. Crowley. “Every American wants to provide their family with care and as the father of three, I can understand why Rep.-elect Harris was concerned about a lapse in coverage for a period of time. But, the harsh reality is that millions of Americans experience gaps in care for even longer periods of time – if they even have any coverage at all. And, that is exactly what the Affordable Care Act is about – giving all Americans access to care.”

“I have a 17 month-old baby boy and a family, so I can understand why Rep.-elect Harris was worried about not being covered. But there are millions of American families struggling to find and afford the coverage they need. That’s why we passed the Affordable Care Act that these Republicans are clamoring to repeal. I don’t think it’s too much to ask that people’s elected representatives live within the same bounds as those they seek to govern. Republicans did nothing for two years but work against health insurance reforms calling it government run health care. Now those same Republicans are reaping the very benefits they wish to deny all other Americans. That to me is the definition of hypocrisy and even worse, selfishness. And in these difficult times we need less selfishness and more selflessness,” said Rep. Sánchez.

“Republican hypocrisy regarding the Affordable Care Act is astounding,” said Rep. Edwards. “Republicans vow to repeal health insurance reform that will provide quality and affordable health care for millions of Americans. Yet, they complain when faced with the possibility of a short gap in insurance coverage that other Americans face, many with no insurance coverage.

All Americans deserve equal access to health care. If Republicans are willing to repeal coverage for millions of Americans, they have no right to accept employer-subsidized FEHBP health insurance or complain about the quality of coverage they are attempting to prevent others from having.”

“House Republicans have spent the past year campaigning against the Affordable Care Act – spending hundreds of millions of dollars to vilify legislation that will positively and significantly impact the lives of 30 million Americans,” said Congressman Tim Ryan. “Now that the campaign is over, Republicans are showing their true colors – insisting that they receive immediate access to the health care system that they were so quick to deny the average citizen. This is clearly a case of Pot v. Kettle, and the American people deserve better.”

To see the letter, click [here](#) . The text of the letter sent to Senate Minority Leader McConnell and Speaker-elect Boehner and the names of the 61 House Democrats who support the letter are below:

Dear Senator McConnell and Representative Boehner:

We were surprised to read in Tuesday’s article “GOP frosh: Where’s My Health Care?” in Politico that some of your incoming members are unhappy with the health benefits they are eligible to purchase under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) – particularly the fact that there is a delay before benefits take effect. Ironically, this is the same predicament millions of Americans currently find themselves in.

It is amazing that your members would complain about not having health care coverage for a few weeks, even after campaigning to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which will help provide coverage to millions of Americans who find themselves without health insurance for months or even years.

We also find it interesting that members of the Republican conference would have no problem taking away health coverage from hard-working Americans, but expect expanded coverage for themselves and their families. The system set up by the Affordable Care Act will allow Americans to choose the plan that works best for them from a variety of private insurance plans, just like the FEHB program that members of Congress are now able to access. The uninsured, small-business employees, and the self-employed will now be able to benefit from this same choice and competition.

It begs the question: how many members of the Republican conference will forgo the employer-subsidized FEHBP coverage and experience what so many Americans find themselves forced to face? If your conference wants to deny millions of Americans affordable health care, your members should walk that walk. You cannot enroll in the very kind of coverage that you want for yourselves, and then turn around and deny it to Americans who don’t happen to be Members of Congress. We also want to note that in 2011, the Federal government will pay \$10,503.48 of the premiums for each member of Congress with a family policy under the commonly-selected Blue Cross standard plan.

It is important for the American people to know whether the members of Congress and members-elect who have called for the repeal of health insurance reform are going to stand by their opposition by opting out of the care available to them at the expense of hard-working taxpayers. We look forward to your response in the coming days about exactly how many of the members in the Republican conference will be declining their taxpayer-supported health benefits.

Sincerely,

Joeseeph Crowley	Linda Sánchez	Donna Edwards
Tim Ryan	Gary Ackerman	Joe Baca
Timothy Bishop	G.K. Butterfield	Lois Capps
Michael Capuano	Donna Christensen	Judy Chu
Yvette Clarke	Steve Cohen	Gerald Connolly
John Conyers, Jr.	Elijah Cummings	Diana DeGette
Rosa DeLauro	Keith Ellison	Eliot Engel
Anna Eshoo	Bob Filner	Marcia Fudge
John Garamendi	Charles Gonzalez	Raul Grijalva
Brian Higgins	Rush Holt	Michael Honda
Steve Israel	Jesse Jackson, Jr.	Barbara Lee
Sander Levin	John Lewis	Nita Lowey
Edward Markey	Betty McCollum	Jim McDermott
James McGovern	Gregory Meeks	Geroge Miller
James Moran	Richard Neal	William Owens
Chellie Pingree	David Price	Charles Rangel
Laura Richardson	Lucille Roybal-Allard	Loretta Sanchez
Janice Schakowsky	Allyson Schwartz	Jackie Speier
Fortney Pete Stark	Paul Tonko	Edolphus Towns
Chris Van Hollen	Nydia Velazquez	Anthony Weiner
John Yarmuth		